

Guide to Obtaining Environmental Modifications Under the Elderly or Disabled with Consumer Direction (EDCD) Waiver

This guide is written to help you better understand what Environmental Modifications are, how you can find out if you qualify, how much money you can spend, and how you can get the modifications you need.

What are Environmental Modifications?

Environmental modifications are physical changes to the place you live, to your main vehicle, and in some cases to your workplace, which give you a direct medical or remedial benefit. The environmental modification must be necessary to guarantee your health, welfare, and safety, or assist you to live in the community with greater independence. You may need environmental modifications to live in the community instead of in an institution.

✚ Home modifications to the place that you live include, but are not limited to, putting in ramps and grab-bars, widening doorways, changing the layout of your bathroom or kitchen, changing the location of your air-conditioning or heating controls, and putting in special electric and plumbing systems that you need for your medical equipment and supplies.

- You cannot use modifications to bring a substandard dwelling up to minimum standards or to make improvements to your residence that are of general use (for example new carpeting, roof repairs, or central air conditioning) and are not of direct medical or remedial benefit to you.
- Modifications are also not available if some other law (for example, the Fair Housing Act or the Virginia Fair Housing Law) requires the modification to be made by a third party.
- Modifications that add to the total square footage of the home are not available except when they are necessary to complete the modification (for example, in order to improve entry to or exit from a residence or to enlarge a bathroom to accommodate a wheelchair).

✚ Modifications may be made to a vehicle if it is your main vehicle.

✚ Modifications may be made to the place you work if the modification exceeds the “reasonable accommodation” requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Environmental modifications are not available to you if you are living in any residence that is licensed or certified by the Commonwealth of Virginia or approved by a local government agency.

How much money can I spend on Environmental Modifications?

Each calendar year, you can spend up to \$5,000 on environmental modifications that you need. You cannot carry over the costs for environmental modifications from year to year, you cannot duplicate the modifications, and you must get prior authorization (approval) before the modifications can be made.

If you are currently in an institution and plan to move to the community under the Money Follows the Person Project, you may be eligible for funding for home modifications that exceed the \$5,000 Medicaid limit. Ask your transition coordinator or facility staff if you are eligible.

How do I qualify?

To qualify for the \$5,000 per year environmental modifications benefit, you must be enrolled in the Elderly or Disabled with Consumer Direction (EDCD) Home and Community Based Waiver. Additionally, your need must be documented in your service plan. Your service plan is reviewed each year that you get services and supports through the EDCD Waiver. You must use at least one other EDCD Waiver service in order to be eligible for environmental modifications (for example, personal care, respite care or attendant care).

How do I begin the process of getting needed environmental modifications?

In order to begin the process you will need to:

- ✚ Determine your Environmental Modification needs/desires;
- ✚ Obtain the necessary evaluations with written recommendations from an occupational therapist, physical therapist, physician, or rehabilitation engineer; and,
- ✚ Based on the recommendations which outline your needs, you must choose a Medicaid approved provider and get a price quote from them. (Please see the information below to help you find an approved provider.)

Who can assist me with getting my environmental modifications?

You may have a transition coordinator or service facilitator who can help you identify and get the environmental modifications that you need.

If you do not have a transition coordinator or service facilitator who works with you, you must contact your primary care doctor in order to begin the process. Your doctor (or physical, speech, or occupational therapist if needed) will be able to help you determine what types of environmental modifications you need to live safely in the community. They must give you documentation that shows that you need these modifications in order to live successfully in the community.

In order to begin this process, you will need to find a provider who can make your modification/s. You can access this information on the internet at www.dmas.virginia.gov/ltc-home.htm#Waiver_Services_Program or www.olmsteadva.com/mfp. If you are unable to get the information you need from the internet, you may call DMAS at 804-225-4222 and request a provider list.

Your spouse and parents may not serve as your provider.

Once you choose a provider, you will need to contact the provider to explain what you need and get a price quote from the provider.

What should I expect out of a price quote?

Once you have your provider list from DMAS, you will be able to call the provider you choose and ask for a quote for the environmental modification/s you need. You do not have to call more than one provider, but may want to in order to get the best price.

When you get a quote from a provider, the quote should contain the following information:

- ✚ Your name and Medicaid ID;
- ✚ The modification you are asking for;
- ✚ The cost for the modification/s (with a breakdown of labor costs and the cost for materials);

- ✚ When the modification/s will be started and completed; and,
- ✚ The provider's name and Medicaid provider number.

Do I need prior authorization from the state Medicaid agency (the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)) before I get my environmental modification/s?

Yes, you will need to get prior authorization from DMAS before you can contract for your environmental modification/s. This process ensures that your request will best suit your individual needs and that Medicaid can pay for the environmental modification/s you request. Modifications must be completed within a year from the date they are authorized.

How do I get a prior authorization?

The provider you choose to work with will need to get prior authorization before an environmental modification can be made for you. DMAS currently contracts with KePRO, a company that handles all requests for prior authorization.

If you, or your provider, have questions about the prior-authorization process, you can reach KePRO by email at providerissues@kepro.org or by phone at 1-888-827-2884. You or your provider can also contact DMAS by email at PAUR06@dmass.virginia.gov or by phone at 804-225-3639.

Is there any paperwork that needs to be completed?

Your environmental modification provider (or transition coordinator or service facilitator, if you have one) must fill out the necessary paperwork for a prior authorization request. This includes the DMAS 98 Community Based Care Waiver Request Form, a price quote, and any documents that justify your need for the modification. Requests for prior authorization to KePRO may be done by fax, iEXCHANGE, phone, or mail.

Once my request for prior authorization is turned in, how long will it take for me to hear from them?

KePRO will process your request within 15 business days. Once a decision has been made, KePRO will contact your environmental modification provider. Your provider should contact you with information about the decision.

How are prior authorizations processed?

Once your request has been submitted for prior authorization to KePRO, their doctors and health professionals review the request and determine if it can be approved. If your request is approved, you can schedule your modifications to be made.

If my request for prior authorization is denied, what do I do?

If your request for prior authorization is denied, and you do not agree with the denial, you have the right to file an appeal within 30 days of the written notification being received. You can appeal by sending either:

- ✚ A written appeal request or
- ✚ An Appeal Request Form. You can find the request form on the internet at www.dmass.virginia.gov, or by calling (804) 371- 8488.

In either case, you should send the written appeal to:

Appeals Division
Department of Medical Assistance Services
600 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

You may also fax your appeal request to (804) 371- 8491.

You may also want to consider these other ways of getting the modifications you want.

Some non-Medicaid programs offer home modifications. Visit the [Virginia Housing Development Authority](http://www.vhda.com) (VHDA) (www.vhda.com) for more information. You can also contact Your local [Center for Independent Living](http://www.drs.virginia.gov) (www.drs.virginia.gov) [Area Agency on Aging](http://www.vda.virginia.gov) (www.vda.virginia.gov) or [public housing agency](http://www.vhda.com) (www.vhda.com).

To find out more about help for very low income families to modify their home, visit the [Rural Development Housing and Community Facilities Development](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/sfh/brief_repairloan.htm) website (http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/sfh/brief_repairloan.htm).

Tax credit information about home modifications is also available on the [Virginia Government Tax Credit](http://www.tax.virginia.gov/site.cfm?alias=taxcredit2#accessibility) website (http://www.tax.virginia.gov/site.cfm?alias=taxcredit2#accessibility).

The NewWell Program (once called the Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority) is a low interest loan program that assists individuals with disabilities in getting the equipment and modifications they need. This program was designed by individuals who needed equipment to assist in their work, play, education, and life and had difficulty finding the money to purchase these items. Many had no credit history or poor credit due to their disability or health issues. You can apply to the NewWell Fund, regardless of income and no matter how small a loan you might need. Credit history, current income and existing debt will determine if your application is approved. NewWell makes loans for adaptive vans and modified vehicles, home modifications, hearing aids, and more. You can contact this program by:

-  Toll-free phone number: 1-866-835-5976
-  E-Mail at atlfa@atlfa.org
-  Fax Number: (804) 662-9533
-  Website: www.atlfa.org

What if I have general questions or concerns?

If you would like to speak with someone about your request for environmental modifications, you should call either the provider you have chosen to work with or DMAS at 804-225-4222